

Legislative Review

A Look at Higher Education in Week 3: Jan. 19-23, 2009



As of 2005, the state is divided into 47 senatorial districts, each having one senator and two representatives. Thus, 47 senators and 94 representatives make up the 61st Legislative Assembly.

Monday, Jan. 26 is the deadline for senators to introduce bills. Thursday, Jan. 29 is the deadline for introducing resolutions, except amendments to the state constitution and study resolutions.

One-Time, 2 Percent Retiree Benefits Increase Bill Heard

HB 1121, a bill that would provide, among other things, a one-time, 2 percent increase in employer contributions to retiree benefits, was heard in the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, Thursday, Jan. 22.

Chancellor Bill Goetz testified that the NDUS supports providing a one-time increase in employer contributions to the PERS defined-benefit plan. He said the NDUS has about 2,700 employees who participate in this plan and requested an amendment to include funding for NDUS

campuses. Otherwise, he said, the NDUS would be left with an unfunded mandate.

Goetz asked the committee to provide the same one-time benefit to the almost 4,400 NDUS employees who participate in defined contribution plans, primarily the TIAA-CREF plan. Goetz said these employees also have sustained significant losses due to changes in the investment market.

The committee amended the bill to remove the 2 percent increase, but has not acted on the bill.

House Appropriations Hears Searchable Expenditures Database Bill

HB 1377, a bill mandating that the Office of Management and Budget create a searchable database of state expenditures, was heard in the House Appropriations Committee Monday, Jan. 19.

Vice Chancellor Laura Glatt testified, expressing concern about data privacy issues. She told the committee the current \$1 million OMB cost analysis does not include NDUS costs for developing a database, and the NDUS currently does not collect some of the information required in the bill.

A representative of OMB said the agency will begin reporting additional expenditure information on the agency's Web site beginning in March 2009. Glatt said NDUS information is not included in the reports, and a similar report by the University System is not being created.

The committee did not take action on the bill.

DPI Appropriation Bill Heard in House Appropriations

HB 1013, the Department of Public Instruction appropriation bill, was heard in the House Appropriations Committee, Education and Environment Division, Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Vice Chancellor Mike Hillman provided testimony in support of the funding for career advising included in the bill. He told the committee the joint boards of education have been working to address a number of state systemic education issues, including comprehensive career planning.

Hillman said the joint boards' recommendations were consistent with the Commission on Education Improvement's recommendations included in the governor's budget.

The committee did not take action on the bill.

CTE Appropriation Bill Heard

SB 2019, the Career and Technical Education appropriation bill, was heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee Thursday, Jan. 22.

Vice Chancellor Marsha Krotseng testified in support of the \$3,305,000 included in the bill for trainND, North Dakota's workforce training system. Krotseng said that, to be competitive in the 21st century, North Dakota businesses must continually adapt to advances in technology. She emphasized the importance of becoming lifelong learners and the role of trainND in the process.

The committee did not take action on the bill.

WSC Virtual Center Bill Heard

HB 1230, a bill that provides a \$6 million Permanent Oil Tax Trust Fund appropriation to WSC for construction of a career and technical education virtual center, was heard in the House Education Committee Monday, Jan. 19.

Chancellor Bill Goetz testified in support of the bill, considering the source of funding is the Permanent Oil Trust Fund and the project would not impact SBHE capital project priorities.

The committee did not take action on the bill.

Bill on Budget Section Authorization of FTE Positions Heard

HB 1027, a bill that gives the Budget Section authority to increase the number of legislatively authorized FTE positions, was heard in the House Appropriations Committee Monday, Jan. 19.

Vice Chancellor Laura Glatt testified that SB 2003 and SB 2020, the NDUS appropriations bills, include specific FTE authorizations by campus and entity. She told the committee that SB 2003 also includes a section permitting the SBHE to adjust FTE positions as needed, subject to the availability of funds, for the institutions and entities under its control.

The committee agreed to amend SB 2003 to clarify that the requirements of HB 1027 would not apply to the NDUS. The bill was passed out of committee with a unanimous "do pass" vote.

Bills Failed This Week

HB 1055: Provided a \$400,000 appropriation to the Adjutant General for training grants for fire departments, law enforcement, emergency medical services and dispatchers

HB 1056: Provided a \$100,000 appropriation to the Adjutant General to study a multidiscipline emergency responder academy

SB 2175: Expanded health insurance coverage for students who take medical leave for absences of no more than 12 months

On the Week Four Agenda

HB 1347 Mon., Jan. 26, 8 a.m. H-JUD: Expands the definition of political purposes in a law prohibiting use of state property or services to include initiated or referred measures and constitutional amendments

HB 1400 Mon., Jan. 26, 9 a.m. H-EDU: Increases K-12 calendar days from 173 to 180, requires one counselor for every 380 students, changes high school units and career advisors

SB 2266 Mon., Jan. 26, 9 a.m. S-HUMSER: Provides a \$4.9 million general fund appropriation to UND to fund a nursing simulation lab initiative

SB 2238 Mon., Jan. 26, 9:30 a.m. S-EDU: Appropriates \$26.5 million to the NDUS to freeze 2009-11 tuition rates

HB 1480 Mon., Jan. 26, 3 p.m. H-EDU: Establishes an ESPB mentorship grant program and an instructional coaching pilot project

SB 2038 Tues., Jan. 27, 8:30 a.m. S-APPR: Provides the NDUS flexibility with accountability; an amendment adds additional reporting requirements

HB 1273 Tues., Jan. 27, 9 a.m. H-EDU: Expands eligibility for dual-credit courses to 10th grade students

SB 2302 Tues., Jan. 27, 9:30 a.m. S-EDU: Requires tuition and fee waiver for children in foster care

HB 1394 Tues., Jan. 27, 10 a.m. H-EDU: Provides an appropriation for financial assistance to tribally controlled community colleges

SB 2062 Tues., Jan. 27, 11 a.m. S-EDU: Creates the North Dakota Opportunity Grant Program

HB 1566 Tues., Jan. 27, 11:30 a.m. H-EDU: Requires the NDUS to study ways to improve interaction between the NDUS and tribal colleges

HB 1487 Wed., Jan. 28, 8:30 a.m. H-APPR: Prohibits expenditure of federal stimulus or recovery funds unless appropriated by the Legislative Assembly

SB 2226 Wed., Jan. 28, 9 a.m. S-EDU: Increases state grant program and STEM/technology occupations grants from \$1,000 to \$2,000

HB 1434 Wed., Jan. 28, 2 p.m. H-EDU: Provides an appropriation for endowment funds at each NDUS campus for endowed chairs

HB 1532 Thurs., Jan. 29, 10:45 a.m. H-GVA: Mandates collection of recyclable materials on state property and facilities

HB 1348 Fri., Jan. 30, 8:30 a.m. H-GVA: Permits concealed weapons at public events, including NDUS campuses

HB 1350 Fri., Jan. 30, 9 a.m. H-NATRES: Provides a \$5 million appropriation to the Dept. of Commerce for construction of a great plains applied energy research center at BSC

HB 1322 Fri., Jan. 30, 10 a.m. H-NATRES: Creates an energy policy commission and an interim study of livestock feeding facilities and the use of byproducts from biofuels as feedstock